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Notes on Shakspeare's Plays

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NOTES

ON

SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

BY

HENRY J. POTTS.

Birmingham:

W. G. PROVERBS, LADYWOOD STEAM PRINTING WORKS, LEDSAM STREET.

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

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PREFACE.

AS there is such a revival of Shakspearean literature at the present day, I have often thought it would supply a great need if someone, who takes an interest in the Drama, would give to the public periodically, in a cheap form, so far as can be obtained, those old plays, novels, and tales, upon which Shakspeare founded most of his writings. Such a publication would give to the reader a very accurate idea of the value of Shakspeare's Works, as compared with those plays, &c., which he made so remarkable a use. In this treatise, I have only been able to glance at the subject; but so far as I have gone, I hope as a hand-book this may be acceptable to all lovers of the Shakspearean drama.

H. J. Potts.

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Notes on Shakspeare's Plays.

REVIEWING the literature prior to and contemporary with Shakspeare, in writing his dramas, there can be little doubt but what he borrowed largely from every source, or in other words, he gathered ideas and suggestions from works for numerous scenes which appear in his plays; that there is a great tendency in us all to exalt Shakspeare, and deery and underrate the merits of those writers who lived with and before his time. To accept all Shakspeare has written in the dramatic world as being purely original and never having been hinted at before, is a mistake; when at the same time we must remember he was beholden to writers of nearly every age and country. Certainly we have our national character for literature to maintain, and as a specimen we cannot point to any of the Elizabethian dramatists, except Shaksepare, although they all contributed, more or less, their mite, in creating the English drama. Looking at the general excellence, however, that dwell in his plays, he is the only deserving genius of whom we can load with honours, and safely and with credit to ourselves, build up our literary reputation. I for one admire and look upon Shakspeare as the greatest writer that ever lived; but in reading his plays there are scenes and ideas which strike me as either being borrowed, or which may have furnished our author with hints for characters and incidents in many of his plays. I will endeavour to point some of these out. Take Homer's scenes, for instance; in his Iliad, translated by Chapman, in which Shakspeare, not being either Greek or Latin scholar* sufficiently, would most likely make use of this translation, and we shall be impressed with the likeness one scene bears to another. I hope I shall be clearly understood, as I am not comparing the works or genius of any other writer with that of Shakspeare, for he, far above all others, created for himself a world of his own, and peopled it with beings, the most varied and delightful the mind of man can conceive. This cannot be said of any other writer whatever, except Homer, who is considered approaching nearest to

*According to Ben Jonson, Shakspeare knew little of Latin, and less of Greek.

Shakspeare for his creative and inventive power. In proceeding with this little work, I will draw attention in the first place, and will ask the reader to compare the scene of Richard III's dream in his tent before the battle, with Chapman's translation of the Iliad, book 2, page 29 and 30, and I here ask whether this little incident in Homer may not have suggested to our author the idea for the scene in Richard III? I allude to Jupiter and Agamemnon's dream. In this there appears to me a great similitude; it is as follows:—

The other Gods, and knights at arms, all night slept; only Jove
Sweet slumber seiz'd not; he discours'd how best he might approve
His vow made for Achilles' grace, and make the Grecians find
His miss in much death. All ways cast, this counsel serv'd his mind
With most allowance; to despatch a harmful Dream to greet
The king of men, and gave this charge: "Go to the Achive fleet,
Pernicious Dream, and, being arriv d in Agamemnon's tent,
Deliver truly all this charge. Command him to convent
His whole host arm'd before these tow'rs; for now Troy's broad-way'd town
He shall take in; the heav'n-hous'd Gods are now indiff'rent grown:
Juno's request hath won them; Troy now under imminent ills
At all parts labours." This charge heard, the Vision straight fulfils;
The ships reach'd; and Atrides' tent, in which he found him laid,
Divine sleep pour'd about his powers. He stood above his head
Like Nestor, grac'd of old men most, and this did intimate:
"Sleeps the wise Atreus' tame-horse son? A councillor of state
Must not the whole night spend in sleep, to whom the people are
For guard committed, and whose life stands bound to so much care.
Now hear me, then, Jove's messenger, who, though far off from thee,
Is near thee yet in ruth and care, and gives command by me
To arm thy whole host. Thy strong hand the broad-way'd town of Troy
Shall now take in; no more the Gods dissentiously employ
Their high-hous'd powérs; Juno's suit hath won them all to her;
And ill fates overhang these tow'rs, address'd by Jupiter.
Fix in thy mind this, nor forget to give it action, when
Sweet sleep shall leave thee." Thus, he fled; and left the king of men
Repeating in discourse his dream, and dreaming still, awake,
Of pow'r, not ready yet for act. O fool, he thought to take
In that next day old Priam's town; not knowing what affairs
Jove had in purpose, who prepar'd, by strong fight, sighs and cares
For Greeks and Trojans. The Dream gone, his voice still murmuréd
About the king's ears; who sate up, put on him in his bed
His silken inner weed, fair, new; and then in haste arose,
Cast on his ample mantle, tied to his soft feet fair shoes,
His silver-hilted sword he hung about his shoulders, took
His father's sceptre never stain'd, which then abroad he shook,
And went to fleet. And now great heav'n Goddess Aurora scal'd,
To Jove, and all Gods, bringing light; when Agamemnon call'd
His heralds, charging them aloud to call to instant court
The thick-hair'd Greeks. The heralds call'd; the Greeks made quick resort.

The Council chiefly he compos'd of old great-minded men,
At Nestor's ships, the Pylian king. All there assembled then,
Thus Atreus' son began the court: "Hear, friends: A Dream divine,
Amidst the calm night in my sleep, did through my shut eyes shine,
Within my fantasy. His form did passing naturally
Resemble Nestor; such attire, a stature just as high.
He stood above my head, and words thus fashion'd did relate:
'Sleeps the wise Atreus' tame-horse son? A councillor of state
Must not the whole night spend in sleep, to whom the people are
For guard committed, and whose life stands bound to so much care.
Now hear me, then, Jove's messenger, who, though far off from thee,
Is near thee yet in love and care, and gives command by me
To arm thy whole host. Thy strong hand the broad-way'd town of Troy
Shall now take in; no more the Gods dissentiously employ
Their high-hous'd pow'rs; Saturnia's suit hath won them all to her;
And ill fates over-hang these tow'rs, address'd by Jupiter.
Fix in thy mind this.' This express'd, he took wing and away,
And sweet sleep left me. Let us then by all our means assay
To arm our army; I will first (as far as fits our right)
Try their addictions, and command with full-sailed ships our flight;
Which if they yield to, oppose you." He sate, and up arose
Nestor, of sandy Pylos king, who, willing to dispose
Their counsel to the public good, propos'd this to the state:
"Princes and Councillors of Greece, if any should relate
This vision but the king himself, it might be held a tale,
And move the rather our retreat; but since our General
Affirms he saw it, hold it true, and all our best means make
To arm our army." This speech us'd, he first the Council brake.

Again, the Ghost Scene in Hamlet, compare the 23rd book of the Iliad, page 224, 225, and 226, Chapman's translations to it. Anyone reading this narrative could scarcely fail to be impressed with some likeness there exists between the two ideas. I allude to the scene of Achilles and the ghost of Patroclus, on the sea shore, where he demands and imposes upon his friend the rites of the burial of his body. After the funeral pyre had been prepared for the burning of Patroclus' body, they all retire to rest; Achilles goes to sleep on the sea shore. There is not the depth of treachery and revenge in this book as in Hamlet, although there is treachery and revenge, nevertheless. From the very moment the ghost of Patroclus appears to Achilles, and informs him of the manner of his death, he burns with fiercest anger to avenge the death of his friend upon Hector. This scene, partly a dream and partly a vision, to say the least, may have suggested the idea for the ghost scene in Hamlet, as follows:—

The friend the shores maritimal
Sought for his bed, and found a place, fair, and upon which play'd
The murmuring billows. There his limbs to rest, not sleep, he laid,
Heavily sighing. Round about, silent and not too near,
Stood all his Myrmidons; when straight, so over-labour'd were
His goodly lineaments with chase of Hector, that, beyond
His resolution not to sleep, Sleep cast his sudden bond
Over his sense, and loos'd his care. Then of his wretched friend
The Soul appear'd; at ev'ry part the form did comprehend

His likeness ; his fair eyes, his voice, his stature, ev'ry weed
His person wore, it fantasied ; and stood above his head,
This sad speech utt'ring : " Dost thou sleep ? Æacides, am I
Forgotten of thee ? Being alive, I found thy memory
Ever respectful ; but now, dead, thy dying love abates.
Inter me quickly, enter me in Pluto's iron gates,
For now the souls (the shades) of men, fled from this being, beat
My spirit from rest, and stay my much-desired receipt
Among souls plac'd beyond the flood. Now ev'ry way I err
About this broad-door'd house of Dis. O help then to prefer
My soul yet further ! Here I mourn, but, had the fun'ral fire
Consum'd my body, never more my spirit should retire
From hell's low region ; from thence souls never are retriev'd
To talk with friends here ; nor shall I ; a hateful fate depriv'd
My being here, that at my birth was fix'd ; and to such fate
Ev'n thou, O God-like man, art mark'd ; the deadly Ilion gate
Must entertain thy death. O then, I charge thee now, take care
That our bones part not ; but as life combined in equal fare
Our loving beings, so let death. When from Opunta's tow'rs
My father brought me to your roofs (since, 'gainst my will, my pow'rs
Incens'd, and indiscreet at dice, slew fair Amphidamas)
Then Peleus entertain'd me well ; then in thy charge I was
By his injunction and thy love ; and therein let me still
Receive protection. Both our bones, provide in thy last will,
That one urn may contain ; and make that vessel all of gold,
That Thetis gave thee, that rich urn." This said, Sleep ceas'd to hold
Achilles' temples, and the Shade he thus received : " O friend,
What needed these commands ? My care, before, meant to commend
My bones to thine, and in that urn. Be sure thy will be done.
A little stay yet, let's delight, with some full passión
Of woe enough, either's affects ; embrace we." Op'ning thus
His greedy arms, he felt no friend ; like matter vaporous
The Spirit vanish'd under earth, and murmur'd in his stoop.
Achilles started, both his hands he clapp'd, and lifted up,
In this sort wond'ring : " O ye Gods, I see we have a soul
In th' under-dwellings, and a kind of man-resembling idol ;
The soul's seat yet, all matter felt, stays with the carcass here.
O friends, hapless Patroclus' soul did all this night appear
Weeping and making moan to me, commanding ev'rything
That I intended towards him ; so truly figuring
Himself at all parts, as was strange." This accident did turn
To much more sorrow, and begat a greediness to mourn
In all that heard. When mourning thus, the rosy Morn arose,
And Agamemnon through the tents wak'd all, and did dispose
Both men and mules for carriage of matter for the fire.

Kyd's Spanish Tragedy, entitled " Hieronimo is mad again," is considered by some to have furnished Shakspeare with hints for the ghost scene in Hamlet, and also the idea of Hamlet's revenge for the death of his father. In this play there is a ghost scene, and Revenge appears on the stage with the ghost as a real person. According to some allusion made by Ben Jonson in his poetaster, the play must have been written about 1590. If this supposition be accepted,

we see how easy a thing it was for Shakspeare to embody the thoughts of others, and from them draw such profound dramatic characters.

The next thing we will refer to is in the Midsummer Night's Dream, act 3, scene 2, where Lysander and Demetrius quarrel. Puck enters invisible, and by the intervention of a night's thick cloud, the combatants cease their quarrel. Compare this incident to the 20th book of the Iliad, Chapman's translation, page 184 and 185, where Achilles and Hector combat together, but Apollo enters invisible, and, in the heat of the conflict, envelopes Hector with a thick mist, which he causes to conceal from view, so that by this artifice he gets away unscathed from his opponent. It is as follows :—

When Hector had beheld
His brother tumbled so to earth, his entrails still in hand,
Dark sorrow overcast his eyes ; nor far off could he stand
A minute longer, but like fire he brake out of the throng,
Shook his long lance at Thetis' son ; and then he came along
To feed th' encounter : " O," said he, " here comes the man that most
Of all the world destroys my mind, the man by whom I lost
My dear Patroclus. Now not long the crooked paths of war
Can yield us any privy scapes. ' Come, keep not off so far,'
He cried to Hector, ' make the pain of thy sure death as short
As one so desp'rate of his life hath reason.' " In no sort
This frighted Hector, who bore close, and said : " Æacides,
Leave threats for children. I have pow'r to thunder calumnies
As well as others, and well know thy strength superior far
To that my nerves hold ; but the Gods, not nerves, determine war.
And yet, for nerves, there will be found a strength of pow'r in mine
To drive a lance home to thy life. My lance as well as thine
Hath point and sharpness, and 'tis this." Thus brandishing his spear,
He set it flying ; which a breath of Pallas back did bear
From Thetis' son to Hector's self, and at his feet it fell.
Achilles us'd no dart, but close flew in ; and thought to deal
With no strokes but of sure despatch, but, what with all his blood
He labour'd, Phœbus clear'd with ease, as being a God, and stood
For Hector's guard, as Pallas did, Æacides, for thine.
He rapt him from him, and a cloud of much night cast between
His person and the point oppos'd. Achilles then exclaim'd :
" O see, yet more Gods are at work. Apollo's hand hath fram'd,
Dog that thou art, thy rescue now ; to whom go pay the vows
Thy safety owes him, I shall vent in time those fatal blows
That yet beat in my heart on thine, if any God remain
My equal fautor. In mean time, my anger must maintain
His fire on other Ilians."

Again, compare the incident in the 21st book of the Iliad, page 206, with the same scene in Midsummer Night's Dream, as follows :—

And then Æacides assail'd
Divine Agenor ; but in vain, Apollo's pow'r prevail'd,
And rapt Agenor from his reach ; whom quietly he plac'd
Without the skirmish, casting mists to save from being chas'd
His tender'd person ; and (he gone) to give his soldiers 'scape,
The Deity turn'd Achilles still, by putting on the shape
Of him he thirsted ; evermore he fed his eye, and fled,

And he with all his knees pursu'd. So cunningly he led,
That still he would be near his reach, to draw his rage, with hope,
Far from the conflict.

There remains no doubt that Chapman's translation of these scenes suggested to Shakspeare the one in Midsummer Night's Dream. Call Puck Apollo, and I should like to know where the difference of the scenes consist. There is also a similar idea in the 3rd book, page 75, where Venus conceals Paris, in a cloud of gold, from a combat in which he and Menelaus were engaged. There are but few people, perhaps, who will find the same pleasure in reading these scenes from Chapman as in some of our more modern translations, his style being very antiquated. Pope, for instance, has rendered the whole of the Iliad very grandly, and I should recommend every one who has not done so to read his translation of the same.

Compare the latter portion of Dido, Queen of Carthage, with some of the scenes in Midsummer Night's Dream. Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena, put us in mind, I think, of Marlowe's Æneas, Dido, Iarbas, and Anna, in their crossed loves in their devotion to those they love, and also the scorn and contempt for those they dislike. For instance, Iarbas is in love with Dido, and she is betrothed to him, but despises him, and loves Æneas only, who in turn contemns Dido. Her scorn for Iarbas, and his love to her, although she hates him, grows stronger. Anna loves Iarbas, and he has some regard for her, but only as for a friend; the love and devotion she bears to him is very marked, yet he despises and treats her with contumely. We should bear in mind while reading this play that all the pain and disappointment to these lovers hinges upon the tricks of Venus and Cupid, who assume the habit and form of Ascanius. The same thing may be said of Puck in Midsummer Night's Dream; the similitude begins in act 2, scene 6, and as there are a number of these scenes equally suggestive interspersed throughout the play, we cannot do better as a specimen than give the following :—

Enter Venus, Cupid, *and* Ascanius.
Venus *takes* Ascanius *by the sleeve.*
Ven. Fair child, stay thou with
Dido's waiting-maid;
I'll give thee sugar-almonds, sweet
conserves,
A silver girdle, and a golden purse,
And this young prince shall be thy
playfellow.
Asc. Are you Queen Dido's son?
Cup. Aye, and my mother gave
me this fine bow.
Asc. Shall I have such a quiver
and a bow?
Ven. Such bow, such quiver, and
such golden shafts,
Will Dido give to sweet Ascanius.
For Dido's sake I take thee in my
arms,
And stick these spangled feathers in
thy hat;
Eat comfits in mine arms, and I will
sing.
Now is he fast asleep, and in this
grove,
Amongst green brakes I'll lay Ascanius,
And strew him with sweet-smelling
violets,
[With] blushing roses, purple hyacinths,
These milk-white doves shall be his
centronels,
Who, if that any seek to do him hurt,
Will quickly fly to Cytherea's fist.
Now, Cupid, turn thee to Ascanius'
shape,
And go to Dido, who, instead of him,
Will set thee on her lap, and play
with thee;
Then touch her white breast with
this arrow head,

That she may dote upon Æneas' love,
And by that means repair his broken ships,
Victual his soldiers, give him wealthy gifts,
And he, at length, depart to Italy,
Or else in Carthage make his kingly home.

Cup. I will, fair mother, and so play my part
As every touch shall wound Queen Dido's heart. [*Exit.*

Ven. Sleep, my sweet Nephew, in these cooling shades,
Free from the murmur of these running streams,
The cry of beasts, the rattling of the winds,
Or whisking of these leaves; all shall be still,
And nothing interrupt thy quiet sleep,
Till I return and take thee hence again. [*Exit.*

Enter Cupid.

Cup. Now, Cupid, cause the Carthaginian queen
To be enamoured of thy brother's looks.
Convey this golden arrow in thy sleeve,
Lest she imagine thou art Venus' son;
And when she strokes thee softly on the head,
Then shall I touch her breast and conquer her.

The 18th book of the Iliad probably furnished hints for the fairy scenes in the Midsummer Night's Dream, where Thetis, the goddess of the sea, brings with her all her sea-nymphs to console her son Achilles. It is not unlikely either that Shakspeare, in drawing such a being as Puck, had Marlowe's Cupid, in the form of Ascanius, in his mind. Marlowe's Cupid and Shakspeare's Puck, in their several intrigues with human affairs, are somewhat alike. For instance, the scene where Cupid touches the breast of Dido, and charms her in order that she will suddenly fall in love with Æneas. Puck uses similar arts to enchain the loves of Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena. Another incident bearing upon this play is in the Odyssey, Chapman's translation, book 2, page 45, where Pallas enters invisible the palace of revellers, and suddenly charms them to sleep. The lines are as follows :—

Straight to the house she hasted, and sweet sleep
Pour'd on each wooer, which so laid in steep
Their drowsy temples, that each brow did nod,
As all were drinking; and each hand his load
The cup let fall; all started up and to bed,
Nor more would watch when sleep so surfeited
Their leaden eyelids.

Of all the supernatural creations of Homer, I should be more inclined to think Shakspeare had Apollo in his mind when he created Puck, as Apollo seems to be the god who has the power to assume any shape and form, human or otherwise, who could control and overthrow every well-laid plan of mankind and, if incensed, could bring upon the earth famine, pestilence, and disease. Puck is a very tricksy and playful being indeed; Apollo is more grave than gay. It may be that Shakspeare had the incidents of Homer's Apollo and Pallas in his mind as well as Marlowe's Cupid, when he created Puck. Again, the 10th book of the Odyessy, page 236, Mercury gives Ulysses the herb Moly to overcome Circe, the enchantress. Puck squeezes the juice of some flower upon the eyes of Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena, while sleeping, in order to give their loves a counter-charm or change, and also in the incident of Titania, the

queen of fairies, with Bottom. The discourse in act 2, scene 2, between Oberon and Titania, may have been suggested by the incident in the 1st book of the Iliad, page 3, where Apollo, in answer to the prayers of the insulted and injured priest, sends a dreadful pestilence and plague upon the earth. Or may not Shakspeare have had these lines of Marlowe in his head from Ovid's Elegies, page 256, thus :—

Charms change corn to grass and make it die :
By charms are running springs and fountains dry.
By charms mast drops from oaks, from vines grapes fall,
And fruit from trees when there's no wind at all.

Notice in the next place incidents in the Tempest, and what may have suggested them. The best authorities consider the account of Sir George Somers' shipwreck crew, in his voyage to Bermuda Islands, a reliable source, and the first foundation of the Tempest, the narrative of which was published by Sylvester Jordan. A biographer writes :—He was on a voyage for the purpose of colonizing Virginia, and was cast on the Bermuda Islands, then uninhabited, and generally believed to be enchanted. Several mutinies occurred while Sir George Somers and his people remained on the island, and a sea monster man had once shown himself to some of the party whose eyes were best suited to the rare discovery Stowe, in his annals, speaking of this shipwreck upon the dreadful coast, further remarks that these Islands were of all nations said and supposed to be enchanted, and inhabited by witches and devils, which grew by means of accustomed monstrous thunder storms and tempest. This account of old Stowe of the elemental growth and generation of the hags, imps, devils, and abortions of the Island, is fearfully fine. Caliban, Sycorex, and Setebos well might be imagined to have first glared into life through the long fermenting incantation of accustomed monstrous thunder. The narrative of the shipwreck of Sir George Somers was published in 1610, the Tempest in 1611.

In collecting matter for this work, I shall point to another source as likely to have furnished hints for the wreck scenes in the Tempest. I refer to the former part of Dido, Queen of Carthage, that portion which relates to Æneas and his men being shipwrecked upon the unknown island. If we read this conjointly with Dr. Faustus, and study the Tempest from this view, there is much in it which conveys many similar impressions, both as regards the wreck and Prospero's Necromantic Spells. Again, would not the character of Prospero and Ariel bear a resemblance to Faustus and Mephistophilis ? There may be some grounds for supposing that Shakspeare had in his mind when he drew Prospero and Ariel, the characters of Faustus and Mephistophilis. The relation Ariel bears to Prospero is about the same that Mephistophilis does to Faustus, and the offices of Ariel bear some sort of likeness to those of Mephistophilis. There is this marked difference between these two beings : that the one is a malignant fiend, who seeks his master's hurt, and those around him, while the other is a good and beautiful spirit, who seeks his master's good, and serves him faithfully. Both their natures, too, are of the supernatural, and both plays treat upon necromancy. The Tempest, however, is a far superior production, we admit, viewed from any standpoint, nor would such work as a whole in any way compare with it. Let us select one or two of the passages contained in this play, all of which relate to the subject. Faustus ruminates on the possession of his art, and gives utterance to the following, act 1, scene 1 :—

Faust. How am I glutted with conceit of this !
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will ?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the Ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates ;
I'll have them read me strange Philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings,
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wertenberg,
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad ;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole King of all the Provinces ;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of War
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

Another, act 1, scene 4 :—

Meph. Here, take this book, peruse it thoroughly ; [*Gives a book.*
The iterating of these lines brings gold ;
The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder and lightning ;
Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,
And men in armour shall appear to thee,
Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

Another, act 1, scene 3 :—

Faust. My heart's so hardened I cannot repent.
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful thunders echo in mine ears
Faustus, thou art damned ! Then swords and knives,
Poison, guns, halters, and envenomed steel
Are laid before me to despatch myself,
And long ere this I should have slain myself,
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair.

Again, just before Faustus has sold his soul, he is very much troubled. Mephistophilis, perceiving this, says :—

Meph. I'll fetch him something to delight his mind.
[*Aside, and exit.*
Re-enter Mephistophilis *with Devils, who give crowns and rich apparel to* Faustus, *dance, and depart.*
Faust. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show ?
Meph. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what Magic can perform.

May not the above incident have suggested the one in the Tempest, act 3, scene 3. Shakspeare has made much of this idea. There is one more scene to which I wish particularly to draw attention. It is in act 1, scene 6 :—

Enter Faustus *and* Mephistophilis.

Meph. Nay, Faustus, stay; I know you'd see the Pope,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
Where thou shalt see a troupe of bald-pate friars,
Whose *summum bonum* is in belly cheer.

Faust. Well, I'm content to compass then some sport,
And by their folly make us merriment.
Then charm me [so] that I
May be invisible, to do what I please
Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome.

[Mephistophilis *charms him.*

Meph. So, Faustus, now
Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discerned.

Sound a Sennet. Enter the Pope *and and the* Cardinal of Lorrain, *to the Banquet, with* Friars *attending.*

Pope. My Lord of Lorrian, wilt please you draw near?

Faust. Fall to, and the devil choke you an you spare!

Pope. How now! Who's that which spake? Friars, look about.

First Friar. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

Pope. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

Faust. I thank you, sir.

[*Snatches the dish.*

Pope. How now! Who's that which snatched the meat from me? Will no man look? My Lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

Faust. You say true. I'll ha't.

[*Snatches the dish.*

Pope. What, again! My lord, I'll drink to your grace.

[*Snatches the cup.*

C. of Lor. My lord, it may be some ghost newly crept out of Purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

Pope. It may be so. Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost. Once again, my lord, fall to.

[*The* Pope *crosses himself.*

Faust. What are you crossing of yourself?
Well, use that trick no more I would advise you.

[*The* Pope *crosses himself again.*

Well, there's a second time. Aware the third,
I give you fair warning.

[*The* Pope *crosses himself again, and* Faustus *hits him a box of the ears; and they all run away.*

Come on, Mephistophilis, what shall we do?

Meph. Nay, I know not. We shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle.

Faust. How! bell, book, and candle —candle, book, and bell.
Forward and backward to curse Faustus to Hell!
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, an ass bray.
Because it is Saint Peter's Holiday.

Re-enter the Friars *to sing the Dirge.*

First Friar. Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion. [*They sing.*

Cursed be he that stole away his Holiness' meat from the table! Maledicat Dominus!

Cursed be he that struck his Holiness a blow on the face! Maledicat Dominus!

Cursed be he that took Friar Sandelo a blow on the pate! Maledicat Dominus!

Cursed be he that disturbeth our holy dirge! Maledicat Dominus!

Cursed be he that took away his Holiness' wine! Maledicat Dominus! Et omnes Sancti! Amen!

[Mephistophilis *and* Faustus *beat the Friars, and fling fireworks among them; and so exeunt.*]

The above scene, there can be no doubt, suggested not a few of those in the Tempest. For instance, we have Ariel moving about invisible in mid-air, actuating those around him. The intrigues of this sprite with Prospero, his brother, the courtiers, the drunken butler Stephano, Trinculo the jester, and Caliban, resemble in some degree the tricks of Faustus and Mephistophilis with the pope and friars. This scene will compare, more than anything I know of, with the incident in the Tempest, act 3, scene 2. Yet some people may urge, could not Shakspeare get his inspiration from the same source as Marlowe? I say yes; but the incident is entirely his own, and it so happened that Marlowe was the first great scholar and dramatist who pointed to the legend as a subject for a drama. There are many great thoughts and truths, both in literature and science, lie latent and buried until someone with a better wit, and deeper penetration than ourselves, stumbles upon them and discovers them to us. The same truth impresses different minds differently, nor are we all possessed with discrimination alike; some have it in a greater or less degree—not that I would infer that Shakspeare was wanting in discernment, or that Marlowe should possess this in a greater sense than Shakspeare; what I wish to convey is, as some writer has it, "that a great genius seldom, if ever, creates a new form of literature into which to throw the products of his intellect. He generally adopts that which is already popular, and consecrates it to his purpose." Hence we may venture to assert that Shakspeare would not go out of his way for ideas, while he could get them so near at hand, clothed in such language as only Marlowe could use.

Also refer to Chapman's translation of the Odyssey, the 4th book, page 100, where the conspirators hold an audience, as follows :—

> This all applauded, and gave charge to do,
> Rose, and to greet Ulysses house did go ;
> But long time passed not ere Penelope
> Had notice of their far-fetched treachery.
> Medon, the herald, told her who had heard
> Without the hall how they within conferred,
> And hasted straight to tell it to the queen.

This little incident of conspiracy probably suggested the one in the Tempest. Medon, the herald, may be likened to Ariel in act 2, scene 1, announcing to the sleeping Alonzo the base treachery and plot of Sebastian and Antonio upon his life. Nor will the Tempest become less interesting if we keep in mind while we read it the 4th and 6th book of the Odyssey; indeed I think Shakspeare was very conversant with the Iliad and Odyssey, as they are a fund of rich and varied resources. In Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage, act 3 scene 3, there is another idea very similar in the following lines :—

> *Ven.* What should this mean? My doves are back returned,
> Who warn me of such danger prest at hand,
> To harm my sweet Ascanius' lovely life.
> Juno, my mortal foe, what make you here?
> Out, hateful hag! thou would'st have slain my son,
> Had not my doves discovered thy intent;
> But I will tear thy eyes from forth thy head,
> And feast the birds with their bloodshotten balls,
> If thou but lay thy fingers on my boy!

Setebos, of whom Shakspeare speaks, is the god of Sycorex, and other foul witches of the island. I never read this passage in the Tempest but I am reminded of the relation this Setebos may bear to Proteus, as he seems a very potent minister, and a compound of witch, sea god, and enchanter. Idothea, a sea spirit, and the supposed offspring of Proteus, has a strange affinity of nature to Ariel, any more than the character and qualities of Ariel are unfolded and better developed by Shakspeare. In the absence of any other theory or conjecture, Setebos might be said to be the father of Ariel.

Consider in the next place Middleton's Witch Scene with relation to the Tempest, and Macbeth, as follows :—

THE WITCHES' HABITATION.

Enter Heccat, Stadlin, Hoppo, *and other Witches.*

Hec. The moon's a-gallant, see how brisk she rides.

Stad. Here's a rich evening, Heccat

Hec. Aye ! is't not, wenches, to take a journey of five-thousand miles?

Hop. Ours will be more to-night.

Hec. Oh, 'twill be precious ;
Heard you the owl yet ?

Stad. Briefly, in the copse, as we came through now.

Hec. 'Tis high time for us, then.

Stad. There was a bat hung at my lips three times as we came through the woods, and drank her fill. Old Puckle saw her.

Hec. You are fortunate, still; the very screech owl lights upon your shoulders, and woos you like a pigeon. Are you furnished ? Have you your ointments ?

Stad. all.

Hec. Prepare to fight, then ;
I'll overtake you swiftly.

Stad. Hie, then, Heccat, we shall be up betimes.

Hec. I'll reach you quickly.
[*They ascend.*

Enter Firestone.

Fire. They are all going a-birding to-night. They talk of fowls i' th' air that fly by day; I'm sure there'll be a company of fowl sluts there to-night, if we have not mortality afear'd. I'll be hanged ! for they are able to putrify it to infect a whole region. She spies me now.

Hec. What, Firestone ? My own sweet son ?

Fire. A little sweeter than some of you,
Or a dunghill were too good for me.

Hec. How much hast there ?

Fire. Nineteen, and all brave, plump ones, besides six l'zards, and three serpentine eggs.

Hec. Dear and sweet boy, what herbs hast thou ?

Fire. I have some mar-martin and mandragon.

Hec. mar-marritten and mandragora, thou would'st say.

Fire. Here's pannex, too. I thank thee, my pan'akes, I am sore with kneeling down to cut 'em.

Hec. And Selago Hedge Hyssop, too ; how near he goes my cuttings. Were they all cropt by moonlight ?

Fire. Every blade of 'em, or I am a mooncalf, mother.

Hec. Hie thee home with 'em, look well to th' house to-night, I'm for aloft.

Fire. Aloft, quoth you ? I would you would break your neck once, that I might have all quickly.
[*Said aside.*
Hark ! hark ! mother, they are above the steeple already, flying over your head with a noise of musicians.

Hec. They are, indeed ; help me ! help me ! or I'm too late else.

Song in the air above.

Come away, come away, Heccat,
Heccat, come away.

Hec. I come, I come, I come, I come,

With all the speed I may, with all the speed I may.
Where's Stadlin?
The W. above. Here.
Hec. Where's Puckle?
The W. above. Here, and Hoppo too, and Helewain too.
We lack but you, we lack but you,
Come away, make up the count.
Hec. I will but 'noint, and then I mount.
[*A spirit descends in the shape of a cat.*
The W. above. There's one come down to fetch his dues.
A kiss, a coll, a sip of blood, and why thou stay'st so long
I muse, I muse, since th' air's so sweet and good.
Hec. Oh, art thou come? what news? what news?
Spir. All goes still to our delight.
Either come or else refuse.
Hec. Now I'm furnish'd for the flight.
Fire. Hark! hark! the cat sings a brave treble in her own language.
[Hecat, *ascending with the spirit.*
Hec. Now I go, now I fly, Malkin, my sweet spirit, and I.
Oh, what a dainty pleasure 'tis to ride in the air,
To ride in the air when the moon shines fair,
And sing, and dance, and toy, and kiss,
Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,
Over seas, our mistress' fountains,
Over steep tower and turrets,
We'll fly by night, 'mongst troops of spirits;
No ring of bells to our ears sounds,
No howls of wolves, no yelps of hounds;
No, not the noise of water's breach,
Or canon's roar our height can reach.

The Witches sing above, No ring of Bells, &c., &c.

Fire. Well mother, I thank your kindness, you must be gamboling i' th' air, and leave me here to walk like a fool and a mortal. [*exit*

THE WITCHES' HABITATION

Enter Duchess, Heccat, *and* Firestone.

Hec. What death is't you desire for Almachiles?
Duch. A sudden and a subtle.
Hec. Then I've fitted you. Here lie the gifts of both sudden and subtle. His picture made in wax, and gently molten by a blue fire, kindled with dead men's eyes, will waste him by degrees.
Duch. In what time prithee?
Hec. Perhaps a month's progress.
Duch. What, a month? Out upon pictures if they be so tedious; give me things with some life.
Hec. Then seek no farther.
Duch. This must be done with speed, despatched this night if it may possibly.
Hec. I have it for you; here's that will do 't. Stay but perfection's time, and that not five hours hence.
Duch. Canst thou do this?
Hec. Can I?
Duch. I mean so closely.
Hec. So closely do you mean, too?
Duch. So artfully, so cunningly?
Hec. Worse and worse doubts and incredulities they make me mad, let scrupulous creatures know.
Cum volin Ripisipsis Mirantabus Amnes,
In fontes rediere suos concuss aqua sisto
Stantia concutio cantu frcta nubila pello
Nubilaque induco ventos ambigo que vocuque
Vipercas rumpo verbis et carmine fauces
Et silvas moveo jubesque tremis cere montes
Et mugire solum manesque exire sepulchris
Te quoque luna traho.
Can you doubt me, then, daughter, that can make mountains tremble,

miles of wood walk, whole earth's foundations bellow, and the spirits of the entombed to burst from their marbles; nay, draw yon moon to my involv'd designs?

Fire. I know as well as can be when my mother's mad, and our great cat angry, for one spits French then, and the other spits Latin.

Duch. I did not doubt you, mother.

Hec. No? what did you? My power's so firm, it is not to be questioned.

Duch. Forgive what's past, and now I know th' offensiveness that vexes art, I'll shun the occasion ever.

Hec. Leave all to me and my five sisters, daughter; it shall be conveyed in at Howlet time. Take you no care; my spirits know their moments. Raven or screech owl never fly th' door but they call in; I thank 'em, and they lose not by it. I give 'em barley soaked in infants' blood. They shall have *semina cum* sanguine, their gorge cramm'd full, if they come to our house; we are no niggard. [*exit Duchess.*

Fire. They fare but too well when they come hither; they ate as much t' other night as would have made me a good conscionable pudding.

Hec. Give me some lizzard's brains, quickly, Firestone.

Hec. Where's Gramam, Stadlin, and all the rest o' th' sisters?

Fire. All at hand, forsooth.

[*The other Witches appear.*

Hec. Give me some mar-maritten, some bear breech.

Fire. Here's bear breech and lizzard's brains, forsooth.

Hec. Into the vessel, and fetch three ounces of the red-hair'd girl I kill'd last night.

Fire. Where about, sweet mother?

Hec. Hip, hip or flank, where is the acopus.

Fire. You shall have acopus, forsooth.

Hec. Stir, stir about, whil'st I begin the charm.

A CHARM SONG.

The Witches going about the Cauldron.

Black spirits, and white red spirits,
and grey,
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that
mingle may.
Titty Tiffin, keep it stiff in,
Firedrake Puckey, make it lucky,
Liard Robin, you must bob in,
Round, around, around, about, about,
All ill come running in, all good keep
out.

First W. Here's the blood of a bat.

Hec. Put in that, oh, put in that.

Second W. Here's a libbard's bane,

Hec. Put in again.

First Witch. The juice of toad, the
oil of adder,

Second W. Those will make the
younker madder

Hec. Put in, there's all, and rid
the stench,

Fire. Nay, here's three ounces of
the red-hair'd wench.

All. Round, around, around, &c.

Hec. So, so, enough, into the vessel with it, there 't hath the true perfection. I'm so light at any mischief, there's no villany but is a tune, methinks.

Fire. A tune? 'tis to the tune of damnation, then, I warrant you, and that song hath a villanous burthen.

Hec. Come, my sweet sisters,
Let the air strike our tune,
Whilst we show reverence to yon
peeping moon.

[*The witches dance, and then exeunt.*

In reading this play, the scene where the witches fly in the air, and music is heard overhead, conveys to the mind an impression something like the one in the Tempest, where Ariel, invisible, is hovering about and above, filling the air with music. Probably the idea of beings playing music in the air suggested itself to Shakspeare for his Ariel, on reading this scene. Besides, Middle-

ton's play, the Witch, is generally admitted to have supplied Shakspeare with the Cauldron Scene in Macbeth. As the reader now has it before him, there will need very little comment of mine on this point. Macbeth is an incomparable work, nor will this play bear any comparision with it. It is certainly interesting to trace the history and progress of our drama, and to ascertain, if possible, to what extent one writer is indebted to another. The witches of Middleton are very fanciful and harmless creations. Shakspeare's three witches have been compared by some writer, and very properly so, to Eschylus' Furies, in his Eumenides. Perhaps he is indebted to the Greek tragic poet for something in Macbeth, although there does not appear to have been any translation of his works in our author's time, at least if there was, there has none come down to us.

The Banquet Scene of Macbeth, act 3, scene 4, may have been suggested by an incident in Beaumont and Fletcher's Knight of the Burning Pestle, and if it be assumed that this play went before Macbeth, as there is some contradiction in the dates of these productions, it is just probable Shakspeare adapted the scene for his play, otherwise Beaumont and Fletcher may be indebted to Shakspeare for the idea. We here append the scene, act 5, scene 1 :—

A ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF VENTERWELS.

Enter Jasper *and* Venterwels, Jasper's *face all mealed.*

Jas. Forbear thy pains, fond man, it is too late.

Ven. Heaven bless me, Jasper !

Jas. Aye, I am his ghost
Whom thou hast injured for his constant love.
Fond, worldly wretch, who does not understand
In death that true hearts cannot parted be,
First know thy daughter is quite borne away
On wings of angels, through the liquid air,
Too far out of thy reach; and never more
Shalt thou behold her face, but she and I
Will in another world enjoy our loves,
Where neither father's anger, poverty,
Nor any cross that troubles earthly men,
Shall make us sever our united hearts.
And never shalt thou sit, or be alone
In any place, but I will visit thee
With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
The great offences which thou did'st to me.
When thou art at thy table with thy friend,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as death itself.

Ven. Forgive me, Jasper. Oh ! what might I do,
Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost ?

Jas. There is no means ; too late thou think'st of this.

Ven. But tell me, what were best for me to do ?

Jas. Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

Again, compare the same to the 24th book of the Iliad, page 265, where Priam enters the court of Achilles at night, while at meat with his friends, unseen by any but him, as follows:—

The king then left his coach
To grave Idæus, and went on, made his resolv'd approach,
And enter'd in a goodly room, where with his princes sate
Jove-lov'd Achilles, at their feast ; two only kept the state
Of his attendance, Alcimus, and lord Automedon,
At Priam's entry. A great time Achilles gaz'd upon
His wonder'd-at approach, nor ate ; the rest did nothing see,
While close he came up, with his hands fast holding the bent knee
Of Hector's conqueror, and kiss'd that large man-slaught'ring hand
That much blood from his sons had drawn. And as in some strange land,
And great man's house, a man is driv'n (with that abhorr'd dismay
That follows wilful bloodshed still, his fortune being to slay
One whose blood cries aloud for his) to plead protection,
In such a miserable plight as frights the lookers on ;
In such a stupified estate Achilles sat to see
So unexpected, so in night, and so incredibly,
Old Priam's entry. All his friends on one another star'd
To see his strange looks, seeing no cause.

There is only one more idea with which I am acquainted that may have caused a train of thought which led to the incident of the Banquet Scene in Macbeth. I refer to the scene in Chapman's Iliad, book 1, page 8 and 9, where the Grecian Council is sitting. Agamemnon and Achilles enter into an angry and furious contest over their beautiful captive, Briseis. Achilles draws his sword upon Agamemnon, and but for Juno, who sees the danger of a combat between them, suddenly sends the goddess Athenia into the council, who appears to Achilles, and at the same time is invisible to all the assembly but him, and who entreats of him to sheath his sword, and be at peace. The ghost of Banquo is invisible to all in the Banquet but Macbeth, and Athenia the goddess is invisible to all in the council but Achilles. So far, then, these two ideas are alike ; although neither of the scenes harrow up the conscience, nor excite terror and remorse, like the one in Macbeth ; the analogy here breaks off, and the most that can be said of them is, " they are suggestive." Yet Middleton's Play, the Witch, and these scenes, would, in Shakspeare's hands, become a source for his Macbeth. Of course, he had the Scottish Chronicles, Legends, and other old histories, one of which relates that Macbeth was met at Forres, on the heath, by three old women, or witches, exclaiming one after the other :—

" All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, Thane of Clamis ;"
" All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor ;"
" All hail, Macbeth ! thou shalt be king of Scotland."

In an age of superstition, when it was currently believed that individuals had intercourse with the unseen world, it is not wonderful that even Macbeth should have fancied that in these empty sounds he heard some prophetic voice, nor could his impression fail to be strengthened by the coincidence that before he had recovered from his surprise, there came a messenger to tell him of his father's death, by which event he became by inheritance Thane of Clamis. Nor was this all ; no sooner was he in possession of his new honours, than a second messenger came from the King, to inform him that the Thane of Cawdor had been guilty of rebellion against the Throne, and having deprived him of his titles and his honours, it was the Royal pleasure to confer them on Macbeth, in remembrance of his recent great victories. He now became Thane of Cawdor

as well as of Clamis, and two parts of the prophecy having been fulfilled, why should it fail ini ts last and highest development?

Let us turn our attention besides to Scriptural revelation, which bears directly upon this subject. I refer more particularly to the 28th chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and the 8th chapter of the Second Book of Kings. In the 10th verse of the 8th chapter of the Second Book of Kings, we have a direct prophecy and a promise, and yet there is implied in this prophecy an amount of equivocation and contradiction. That Shakspeare had this verse of holy writ in his mind is almost certain, when he penned these remarkable lines in act 1, scene 3 :—

> *Witches.* Lesser than Macbeth, and greater,
> Not so happy, yet much happier.
> Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

Again, act 5, scene 7 :—

> *Macbeth.* And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
> That palter with us in a double sense,
> That keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope.

In the 28th chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses, is as follows : And the king said unto her, be not afraid, for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth, &c. The idea of gods ascending out of the earth might have furnished Shakspeare in Macbeth with hints for the different apparations that rise from the cauldron to tell him of his fate. The 8th chapter of the Second Book of Kings, 10th verse, we have the following : And Elisha the prophet said unto Hazael, go, say unto Benadad the king, thou may'st surely recover ; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me that he, Benadad, shall surely die. This is the verse to which I have before referred, that implies such ambiguity and double meaning. Again, in the latter part of the 13th verse, Elisha says to Hazael, the Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria. In this 13th verse, as well as in the 10th, we have a prophetic declaration, calculated to encourage, flatter, and puff up the already formed ambitious and murderous designs of Hazael against his sovereign, Benadad, the king. The prophet Elisha reveals the future up to him in these words: And the Lord shewed me that thou, Hazael, shalt be king over Syria. If Elisha had not uttered this flattering prophecy to Hazael, he may not have murdered Benadad the King. There is much in Macbeth's character like Hazael's. Shakspeare obviously worked this idea in his Macbeth, for no sooner had the witches uttered their prophecy that Macbeth should be king of Scotland, than his ambitious and murderous designs began to show themselves. Some one has said that flattery is the nurse of crime, and I think we have this remark more than verified in the history of Macbeth. Shakspeare has exhausted in this work nearly everything on the subject ; no authority was too poor, nothing too mean, but that his all-assimilating genius could find something in it for his use. It is clear, however, that he consulted and combined three great sources in the construction of this play, viz.: History, Legend, and Scripture.

Let us now look for a little while at Marlowe's Barabas and Shakspeare's Iago. The similarity of Iago with the Jew of Malta is plain in many respects. The plotting, crafty nature of Iago is very much akin to that of Barabas, and it is not at all unlikely that Shakspeare had studied this char-

acter when he drew Iago ; for instance, Barabas plots the lives of two of his dearest friends, Matthias and Lodowick, and succeeds in it. The device in which Matthias and Lodowick are brought to meet by Barabas is followed out closely in a like manner by Iago with Montano, Roderigo, and Cassio ; the two last named characters almost stand in the same relation to Iago as Don Lodowick and Matthias do to Barabas. There is jealousy, too, in both these plays. Shakspeare, however, has developed this passion more finely. Both Don Lodowick and Matthias are in love with Abigail, the Jew's daughter, and Barabas makes Don Lodowick jealous of Matthias, and in turn Matthias jealous of Don Lodowick, until he has created between them a deadly hate. Then comes the forged challenge by Barabas, in which they meet and kill each other. Roderigo and Othello are in love with Desdemona, and Iago makes Roderigo jealous of Othello, and Othello is also aware that Roderigo wants Desdemona ; Roderigo holds Othello in his hate, for the very reason that he is rival in his love ; Iago plans for Roderigo and Othello to meet each other, with a view to a quarrel, so that whoever of the two falls, his ends are met, as in the scene where Iago enters with Othello, Roderigo with Branbantio, the father of Desdemona, their swords drawn. This, I consider, is a direct plot on the part of Iago against the life of Othello, Roderigo, or both. Another incident in act 1, scene 4, where there enter three Jews :- -

1 Jew. Tush, tell not me 'twas done of policy.
2 Jew. Come, therefore, let us go to Barabas, &c.

The opening scene in Othello puts us in mind of the above lines, where enter Roderigo and Iago :—

Rod. Tush, never tell me I take it much unkindly that thou, Iago, who hast had my purse as if the strings were thine, &c.

The language Shakspeare puts in the mouth of Iago when he is plotting his villany, strikes us as being like the speeches of Barabas. We shall have very little difficulty, I think, to discern Iago in some of the following passages:—

Bar. Now I have such a plot for both their lives,
As never Jew nor Christian knew the like ;
One turned my daughter, therefore he shall die,
The other knows enough to have my life,
Therefore 'tis not requisite he should live
No more, but so it must and shall be done.

Again, act 2, scene 3 :—

Bar. So now I will go unto Lodowick,
And like a cunning spirit feign some lie,
Till I have set them both at enmity.

Another, act 3, scene 3 :—

Ith. Why, was there ever seen such villany,
So neatly plotted and so well performed ?
Both held in hand, and flatly both beguiled.

Again, act 4, scene 6 :—

Bar. Well, I must seek a means to rid 'em all,
And presently, for in his villany
He will tell all he knows, and I shall die for it.
I have it !
I will, in some disguise, go see the slave,
And how the villain revels with my gold.

Again, act 5, scene 6 :—

Bar. Why, is not this
A kingly kind of trade, to purchase towns
By treachery, and sell 'em by deceit?
Now tell me, worldlings underneath the sun,
If greater falsehood ever has been done.

Again, act 5, scene 2 :—

Bar. Well, now about affecting this device.
First, to surprise great Selim's soldiers,
And then to make provision for the feast,
That at one instant all things may be done.
My policy detests prevention
To what event my secret purpose drives,
I know, and they shall witness with their lives.

It has often occurred to me that the plot in the Jew of Malta furnished hints for the one in Othello; compare act 2, scene 1, 2, and 3, in Othello, with act 2, scene 3, in the Jew of Malta.

Consider in the next place some of the leading incidents in the Merchant of Venice, and those of the Jew of Malta. The relation Shylock bears to Barabas is more than some people would imagine, although the character of the Jew of Malta is certainly overdrawn, and almost bordering on caricature; on the other hand, we admit, Shakspeare has drawn a character so true to nature in Shylock, that possibly he may have profited much by this exaggeration of Marlowe, and succeeded where he has failed. I shall notice this play under two or three different aspects, first of all, the Jew of Malta, in the opening scene, begins with the mention of shipping expeditions and merchandise; Shakspeare, in the Merchant of Venice, does the same. The speeches of the Jew of Malta are very fine, and obviously suggested some of those in the Merchant of Venice; for instance, the speech of Barabas in act 2, scene 1, as follows :—

Enter Barabas, *with a light.*
Bar. Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings;
Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians.
The uncertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have ta'en their flight, and left me in despair;
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance, like a soldier's scar,
That hath no further comfort for his maim.
O thou, that with the fiery pillar led'st
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,
Light Abraham's offspring; and direct the hand
Of Abigail this night; or let the day
Turn to eternal darkness after this:
No sleep can fasten on my watchful eyes,
Nor quiet enter my distempered thoughts,
Till I have answer of my Abigail.

Again, act 1, scene 3 :—

Bar. Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus on every side are we enriched.
These are the blessings promised to the Jews,
And herein was old Abraham's happiness.

In the Merchant of Venice, act 1, scene 4 :—

Shy. O, father Abraham, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect the thoughts of others, &c.

Again, act 1, scene 3 :—

Shy. When Jacob grazed his Uncle Laban's sheep,
This Jacob from our holy Abraham was, &c.

Again, act 2, scene 5 ;—

Shy. By Jacob's staff I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night, &c.

That Shakspeare, after the manner of Marlowe, should make use in some of Shylock's speeches the name of his father Abraham and his father Jacob, is, I say, a coincidence, and goes to show that he had the speeches of Barabas in his mind when he penned those of Shylock's. The incident where Barabas is summoned to appear before the Council, Governor, and Officers of Malta, and where they extort half of his wealth, and on his denying to pay they would compel him to become a Christian, and on his refusing to become a Christian, the whole of his property and wealth, according to the laws of Turkey are confiscate to the state. The articles of the degrees of Turkey are—First : The tribute money of the Turks shall all be levied amongst the Jews, and each of them to pay one half of his estate. Second: He that denies to pay shall straight become a Christian. Last: He that denies this shall absolutely lose all he has. Shakspeare has made more of this incident than Marlowe, and introduced Shylock's malice as the great moving cause in the degrees of Venice. Again, Marlowe's Jew had an only daughter, who deserts him and would have married with a Christian, but was prevented. Shylock had an only daughter, who runs away from him and marrys with a Christian. The sudden hate which Barabas bears to his daughter, after having been deceived by her, is the same in the Merchant of Venice. The speeches about the money bags and his daughter, there is a similar one in the Merchant of Venice. The Jew of Malta, act 1, scene 2 :—

SCENE—MIDNIGHT.
Enter Abigail.
Abig. Who's that?
Bar. Peace, Abigail, 'tis I.
Abig. Then, father, here receive thy happiness.
[*Throws down bags.*
Bar. Hast thou't?
Abig. Here [*throws down the bags*] hast thou't?
There's more, and more, and more.
Bar. Oh, my girl,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity!
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy!
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss!
Oh, Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too!
Then my desires were fully satisfied;
But I will practice thy enlargement thence :
Oh girl! oh gold! oh beauty! oh my bliss. [*Hugs his bags.*

Shakspeare's celebrated passage, act, 2, scene 6, runs thus :—

Enter Salerino *and* Salanio.
Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable
As the dog Jew did utter in the street.
My daughter ! O my ducats ! O my daughter !
Fled with a Christian ! O my Christian ducats !
Justice ! the law ! my ducats and my daughter !
A sealed bag, two sealed bags, of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter.
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter ! Justice, find the girl !
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.

Let us now point out a few passages without drawing any direct comparison with those in the Merchant of Venice, although they are none the less suggestive. Act 2, scene 4, as follows :—

Bar. As for the diamond, sir, I told you of,
Come home, and there's no price shall make us part.
Even for your honourable father's sake.—
It shall go hard, but I will see your death. [*Aside.*

Act 1, scene 5 :—

Bar. Aye, policy ! that's their profession,
And not simplicity, as they suggest.
The plagues of Egypt, and the curse of heaven,
Earth's barrenness, and all men's hatred
Inflict upon them, thou great *Primus Motor !*
And here upon my knees, striking the earth,
I ban their souls to everlasting pains
And extreme tortures of the fiery deep,
That thus have dealt with me in my distress.

Act 3, scene 5, (alluding to his daughter,) :—

Bar. For she that varies from me in belief,
Gives great presumption that she loves me not,
Or loving, doth dislike of something done.

Act 2, scene 3 :—

Bar. Oh, sir, your father had my diamonds,
Yet I have one left that will serve your turn :
I mean my daughter :—but ere he shall have her
I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood.
I have the poison of the city for him,
And the white leprosy. [*Aside.*

Act 2, scene 6 :—

Bar. Give me the letters. Daughter, do you hear,
Entertain Lodowick the Governor's son
With all the courtesy you can afford;
Use him as if he were a Philistine.
Dissemble, swear, protest, vow to love him,
He is not of the seed of Abraham. [*Aside.*
I am a little busy, sir, pray pardon me,
Abigail, bid him welcome for my sake.

Act 2, scene 6 :—

Bar. The account is made, for Lodowick [he] dies.
My factor sends me word a merchant's fled
That owes me for a hundred tun of wine :
I weigh it this much [*snapping his fingers*]; I have wealth enough.
For now by this has he kissed Abigail ;
And she vows love to him, and he to her,
As sure as heaven rained manna for the Jews,
So sure shall he and Don Mathias die :
His father was my chiefest enemy.

Act 5.—*The Council Scene :*—

Gov. Away with him, his sight is death to me.
Bar. For what, you men of Malta? hear me speak :
She is a courtesan, and he a thief,
And he my bondman. Let me have law,
For none of this can prejudice my life.
Gov. Once more, away with him ; you shall have law.
Bar. Devils, do your worst, I live in spite of you.

Act 3, scene 1 :—

Bar. It's no sin to deceive a Christian,
For they themselves hold it a principle :
Faith is not to be held with heretics,
And all are heretics that are not Jews.

There is one more passage of great vigour, and is worthy of note ; which. for its malicious and subtle phraseology, would compare with those of Shylock, Act 2, scene 3 :—

Bar. In spite of these swine-eating Christians,
(Unchosen nation, never circumcised;
Poor villains such as were ne'er thought upon
Till Titus and Vespasian conquered us,)
Am I become as wealthy as I was ;
They hoped my daughter would have been a nun ;
But she's at home, and I have bought a house
As great and fair as is the Governor's;
And there, in spite of Malta, will I dwell ;
Having Ferneze's hand, whose heart I'll have ;
Aye, and his son's too, or it shall go hard.
I am not of the tribe of Levi, I
That can so soon forget an injury.
We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please :
And when we grin we bite, yet are our looks
As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
And duck as low as any barefoot friar,
Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
Or else be gathered for in our Synagogue ;
That, when the offering-basin comes to me,
Even for charity I may spit into it.
Here comes Don Lodowick, the Governor's son.
One that I love for his good father's sake.

This last speech of Barabas Shakspeare undoubtedly had in his mind when he penned two in the Merchant of Venice, the one beginning with the words,

How like a fawning publican he looks, &c.

The other beginning with the words,

Signior Antonio many time and oft, &c.

It is a remarkable thing that so many ideas in both of these plays should be nearly the same. Mr. Collier, in his history of dramatic poetry, "considers that the Jew of Malta was written in 1589, and on such a point the opinion of no other man is of equal weight. It seems the work of a writer grown confident, not to say careless, by use and success, as may well have been the case of the young author of Tamburlaine and Faustus, and had he carried out the last three acts, as he was well capable of doing, with the same ability as the two first, he would not only have drawn a Jew fit to be matched against Shylock, but have written a play not much inferior to the Merchant of Venice." Hallam says :— "Looking at the first two acts, the drama is more vigorously conceived, both as to character and circumstance, than any other Elizabethian play, except those of Shakspeare's." We cannot do better here than give the introductory notice to Marlowe in his works, by Lieut. Col. Francis Cunningham, as follows :— "On the 26th day of February, 1564, says the register of the parish church of St. George the Martyr, in the ancient city of Canterbury, was christened Christopher, the sonne of John Marlowe ; and exactly two months afterwards, on the 26th of April, 1564, the register of the church of Stratford-upon-Avon records the baptism of Gulielmus, filius Johannis Shakspere. So few days intervened between the births of these two children, one of whom was destined to lead the way in showing what an English Play ought to be, and the other to carry the English Drama to the highest conceivable pitch of excellence and glory. But although they came into the world so nearly together, there was an interval of many years between their deaths. Marlowe perished suddenly before he was twenty-nine, and Shakspeare went quietly to his rest at the age of fifty-two. Had their fates been reversed how different an aspect would our literary history have borne. It is idle to speculate on what Marlowe might have performed if twenty-three years had been added to the narrow span of his working existence ; but it is quite safe to assert that, if Shakspeare had died in 1593, the name, which now fills the whole wide world with its renown, must have been content with a narrow niche in Specimens of Poets of the Age of Elizabeth.*

Some writer has very adroitly put it that Marlowe was the schoolmaster, and Shakspeare the scholar. The scholar, however, soon excelled the schoolmaster. Whatever truth there may be in such an observation, there can hardly be a doubt, I think, that the Jew of Malta furnished Shakspeare with hints both for his Shylock and Iago. When commencing to write for the stage, Shakspeare took to improving old plays ; this he could do to perfection, for in the whole of his works it is clear that he borrows a little and adds a great deal : and like a true artist, could improve upon any or every kind of invention, and was an improver and creator in the highest sense of the word. Nor will his

* "Marlowe was buried on June 1, 1593, and there is reason to suppose that previous to that year Shakspeare had done little more than improve the three parts of *Henry VI.*, (if indeed he had touched the third part of *Henry VI.* at all), and had written *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors*. His *Richard II.* has generally been assigned to the year 1593."—*Collier's Memoirs of Alleyn*, p. 10.

reputation suffer by this fact being widely known, as it only tends to show what scanty material he had in building up the English Drama. One good central idea was sufficient for him to frame a play, grouping around that idea incidents and characters, until it grew in his hands a great work, no matter on what subject, either grave or gay. For instance, I believe the Tempest was struck out in his mind from the account of Sir George Somers' Shipwreck Crew upon the uninhabited island. There is good reason to suppose that in a similar manner Hamlet had its rise in his mind, that is, from the Ghost Scene in Homer's Iliad. Shakspeare, as is the rule with some writers, never commenced in any of his plays with his principal idea at once.

We come next to consider the incidents of the Twelfth Night, and judging from two sources, Shakspeare must have derived much from both : the first is the Philaster, and the other an Italian novel, entitled " Il Sacrificio." The Philaster, on good authority, is asserted to have been written six years before the Twelfth Night, and that it proved a great success to its authors. Shakspeare undoubtedly had this play in his mind up to the second act, while writing the Twelfth Night, especially the incident of Euphrasia, daughter of Dion, who is disguised as a page, under the name of Bellario. As there are a number of scenes and passages equally suggestive contained in this play, we cannot do better, I think, than select one of these, from which the reader may judge of the rest. Act 5, scene 5 :—

Bell. My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtue, and as I did grow
More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
To see the man so praised, but yet all this
Was but a maiden longing to be lost
As soon as found; till, sitting by my window,
Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god
I thought, but it was you, enter our gates.
My blood flew out and back again as fast
As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
Like breath ; then was I call'd away in haste
To entertain you. Never was a man
Heav'd from a sheepcote to a sceptre, raised
So high in thoughts as I. You left a kiss
Upon these lips then which I mean to keep
From you for ever. I did hear you talk
Far above singing. After you were gone
I grew acquainted with my heart, and search'd
What stirr'd it so ; alas ! I found it love.
Yet far from lust, for could I but have lived
In presence of you, I had had my end.
For this I did delude my noble father
With a feign'd pilgrimage, and dress'd myself
In habit of a boy, and, (for I knew
My birth no match for you), I was past hope
Of having you, and understanding well
That when I made discovery of my sex
I could not stay with you, I made a vow
By all the most religious things a maid
Could call together, never to be known,
Whilst there was hope to hide me from men's eyes
For other than I seem'd, that I might ever
Abide with you.

Before bringing this little work to a close, compare one or two more passages of Shakspeare's with the following, in Edward II., act 4, scene 3 :—

Ed. Base fortune! now I see that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which, when men aspire,
They tumble head-long down. That point I touched,
And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?

In Macbeth, act 1, scene 7, is a passage very similar, thus :—

Like vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on th' other side.

Again, in Doctor Faustus, act 1, scene 2 :—

Faust. Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague?

In Richard III act 1, scene 1 :—

Rich. Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments.

In the Massacre of Paris. act 1, scene 8 :—

Guise. And now for this night let our fury stay.
Yet will we not the massacre shall end:
Gonzago, post you to Orleans,
Retes to Dieppe, Mountsorrell unto Rouen,
And spare not one that you suspect of heresy.
And, now stay that bell
That to the devil's [midnight] matins rings.
Now every man put off his burgonet,
And so convey him closely to his bed.

Othello, act 2, scene 3, thus :—

Oth. He that stirs next, to carve for his own rage,
Holds his soul light, he dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell! it frights the isle
From her propriety.

I allude in the former passage to this line "Silence that dreadful bell, &c."

Dido, Queen of Carthage, act 1, scene 3 :—

Jup. I will take order for that presently.

In Othello, act 5, scene 3 :—

Oth. No; his mouth is stopp'd.
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for it.

The Jew of Malta, act 2, scene 1 :—

Bar. But stay, what star shines yonder in the east?
The load star of my life, if Abigail.

Romeo and Juliet, act 2, scene 2 :—

Romeo. But soft; what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

In Edward II., act 4, scene 4 :—

Ed. Gallop apace, bright Phœbus, through the sky,
And dusty night, in rusty iron car;
Between you both, shorten the time, I pray,
That I may see that most desired day,
When we may meet those traitors in the field.

Again, in Hero and Leander, page 198 :—

Incens'd with savage heat, gallop amain.

Shakspeare must have been thinking of one of these passages when he wrote :

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phœbus' lodgings.

In the 1st book of Lucan, page 285, as follows :—
The earth went off her hinges, and the Alps
Shook the old snow from off their trembling laps.

The above is one of Marlowe's mighty lines. The whole passage, says a writer, is so very grandly rendered, so grandly, indeed, that Shakspeare, who evidently had it in his mind, has not excelled it in the speech of Calphurnia, or its echo in Hamlet. In Dido, Queen of Carthage, act 3, scene 2 :—

Juno. Tut, I am simple without mind to hurt,
And have no gall at all to grieve my foes.

In Hamlet, act 2, scene 4 :—

Hamlet. Why should I take it? for it cannot be.
But I am pigeon liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter.

In the Jew of Malta, act 5, scene 4 :—

Bar. And thus far, roundly goes the business.
Thus, loving neither, will I live with both,
Making profit of my policy ;
And he from whom my most advantage comes
Shall be my friend ;
This is the life we Jews are used to lead.

Othello, act 1, scene 3, is almost a corresponding passage, in the soliloquy of Iago, beginning with the words,

Thus do I ever make my fools my purse, &c.

In the Jew of Malta, act 2, scene 5 :—

Bar. I would you were his father too, sir ;
That's all the harm I wish you. The slave looks
Like a hog's cheek, new singed. [*Aside.*
Lod. Whither walk'st thou, Barabas?
Bar. No further ; 'tis a custom held with us,
That when we speak with Gentiles like to you,
We turn into the air to purge ourselves :
For unto us the promise doth belong.

Merchant of Venice, act 1, scene 3 :—

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.

Although there is a great difference in these two passages, yet the one probably suggested the other. In Hamlet, act 1, scene 2, we have the following discourse, respecting the personal appearance of the ghost :—

Hamlet. Armed, say you ?
All. Armed, my lord.
Hamlet. From top to toe ?
All. My lord, from head to foot.
Hamlet. Then saw you not his face ?
Horatio. Oh yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.
Hamlet. What, looked he frowningly ?
Horatio. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Hamlet. Pale or red ?
Horatio. Nay, very pale.
Hamlet. And fixed his eyes upon you ?
Horatio. Most constantly.
Hamlet. I would I had been there.
Horatio. It would have much amazed you.
Hamlet. Very like ; stayed it long ?
Horatio. While one with moderate haste might count a hundred.
Hamlet. His beard was grizzled ? no ?
Horatio. It was as I have seen it in his life, a sable silvered.
Hamlet. I will watch to-night, perchance 'twill walk again.
Horatio. I warrant it will.

The above lines are likely to have been suggested by the two following passages in Homer's Iliad, Chapman's translation, 23rd book, page 226, thus:—

That, beyond
His resolution not to sleep, Sleep cast his sunden bond
Over his sense, and loos'd his care. Then of his wretched friend
The Soul appear'd ; at ev'ry part the form did comprehend
His likeness ; his fair eyes, his voice, his stature, ev'ry weed
His person wore, it fantasied.

Again, in book 2, page 29 :—

Hear friends : A Dream divine,
Amidst the calm night in my sleep, did through my shut eyes shine,
Within my fantasy. His form did passing naturally
Resemble Nestor ; such attire, a stature just as high.
He stood above my head, and words thus fashion'd, &c.

In the 24th book of the Iliad, page 268 :—

This done, his women threw
The coat and cloak on ; but the corse Achilles' own hand laid
Upon a bed, and with his friends to chariot it convey'd.
For which forc'd grace, abhorring so from his free mind, he wept,

Cried out for anger, and thus pray'd : " O friend, do not except
Against this favour to our foe, if in the deep thou hear,
And that I give him to his sire ; he gave fair ransom ; dear
In my observance is Jove's will ; and whatsoever part
Of all these gifts by any mean I fitly may convert
To thy renown here, and will there, it shall be pour'd upon
Thy honour'd sepulchre.

Hamlet, act 1, scene 6 :—

Hamlet. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
Ghost beneath. Swear !
Hamlet. Ha ! ha ! boy, say'st thou so ? art thou there, true penny ?
Come on, you 'lear this fellow in the cellarage,
Consent to swear.
Horatio. Propose the oath, my lord.
Hamlet. Never to speak of this that you have seen.
Swear by my sword.
Ghost beneath. Swear !
Hamlet. Hic et ubique, then we will shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen, and lay your hands again upon my sword.
Swear by my sword never to speak of this that you have heard.
Ghost beneath. Swear by his sword.
Hamlet. Well said, old mole, can'st work i' the earth so fast ?
A worthy pioneer once more remove, good friends.
Horatio. O day ! O night ! but this is wond'rous strange.
Hamlet. Rest, rest perturbed spirit.

In Dido, Queen of Carthage, act 1, scene 3 :—

Æn. Hold ; take this candle, and go light a fire,
You shall have leaves and windfall boughs enow
Near to the woods, to roast your meat withal ;
Ascanius, go and dry thy drenchéd limbs,
While I with my Achates roam abroad,
To know what coast the wind hath driven us on,
Or whether men or beasts inhabit it.
Acha. The air is pleasant, and the soil most fit
For cities, and society's supports ;
Yet much I marvel that I cannot find
No steps of men imprinted on the earth.

Venus interposes here, and in answer to her question :—

Æn. Of Troy am I, Æneas is my name ;
Who, driven by war from forth my native world,
Put sails to sea to seek out Italy ;
And my divine descent, from sceptred Jove :
With twice twelve Phrygian ships I ploughed the deep,
And made that way my mother Venus led ;
But of them all scarce seven do anchor safe,
And they so wracked and weltered by the waves,
As every tide tilts 'twixt their oaken sides ;
And all of them, unburthened of their load,
Are ballassed with billows' watery weight.

But hapless I, God wot, poor and unknown,
Do trace these Libyan deserts all despised,
Exiled forth Europe and wide Asia both,
And have not any coverture but heaven.
Ven. Fortune hath favoured thee, whate'er thou be,
In sending thee unto this courteous coast :
In God's name, on ! and haste thee to the court,
Where Dido will receive ye with her smiles ;
And for thy ships, which thou supposest lost,
Not one of them hath perished in the storm,
But are arrivéd safe, not far from hence ;
And so I leave thee to thy fortune's lot,
Wishing good luck unto thy wandering steps.

May not these have suggested the following passages in the Tempest, act 1, scene 1 :—

Prospero. Wipe thou thine eyes ! have comfort !
The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd
The very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have, with such provision in mine art,
So safely ordered, that there is no soul,
No, not so much perdition as an hair,
Betid to any creature in the vessel
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink.

Again, in act 1, scene 4 :—

Prospero. But are they, Ariel, safe ?
Ariel. Not a hair perished.
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before.
Prospero. Of the king's ship
The mariners say how thou hast disposed,
And all the rest o' the fleet.
Ariel. Safely in the harbour
Is the king's ship, in the deep nook—where once
Thou call'st me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still vex'd Bermoothes—there she's hid,
The mariners all under hatches stowed,
Whom, with a charm joined to their suffer'd labour,
I have left asleep ; and for the rest o' the fleet
Which I dispersed, they all have met again,
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,
Bound sadly home for Naples,
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd,
And his great person perish.

In Doctor Faustus, act 1, scene 3 :—

Faustus [to Meph.] I charge thee to wait upon me whil'st I live
To do whatever Faustus shall command :
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

These lines must have been lingering in the mind of Shakspeare when he makes Ariel exclaim in the Tempest, act 1, scene 4 :—

Ariel, [to Prospero.] I come to answer thy best pleasure, be't to fly,
To swim, to dive, into the fire to ride,
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding, task
Ariel and all his quality.

The Midsummer Night's Dream, act 2, scene 2. Puck, in describing his own character, says to one of the fairies :—

Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly-foal.
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her wither'd dew lap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And tailor cries, and falls into a cough,
And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe,
And waxen in their mirth, and sneeze, and swear,
A merrier hour was never wasted there.

Compare this passage with one in Chapman's Odyssey, book 4, page 91. Idothea, a sea-spirit, describes Proteus in these terms :—

He then will turn himself to every one
Of all things that in earth creep and respire,
In water swim, or shine in heavenly fire.
First he is a lion, with a mighty mane,
Then next a dragon—a pied panther then.
A vast boar next, and suddenly will strain
All into water. Last he will be a tree,
Curl'd all at top, and shot up to the sky.

Both the creations of these poets, Puck and Proteus, shift about at pleasure animating other existences. Whether Shakspeare had Proteus in his mind when he penned these lines, may be open to question, although there does seem some likeness in the ideas.

Middleton has a line in his Witch Scene, as follows :—

His picture made in wax, and gently molten by a blue fire kindled with dead men's eyes.

There is an idea very similar in Midsummer Night's Dream, act 3, scene 2, in the speech of Titania with her fairies, thus :—

And light them at the fiery glow worm's eyes, &c.

There is another line in this play which may have suggested a passage in Macbeth, as follows :—

Heccat. Can you doubt me then, daughter, that can make mountains tremble, miles of wood walk, &c.

In Macbeth, act 4, scene 2, thus :—

Apparition. Macbeth will never vanquished be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.

The Jew of Malta, act 1, scene 4 :—

Abigail. Then, Father, go with me.
Barabas. No, Abigail ; in this
It is not necessary I be seen,
For I will seem offended with thee for't.
Be close, my girl, for this must fetch my gold.

Othello, act 1, scene 2 :—

Iago [to Roderigo.] Farewell ! for I must leave you.
It seems not meet nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced, as if I stay I shall,
Against the Moor.

The Jew of Malta, act 1, scene 2 :—

Barabas. What ? bring you scripture to confirm your wrongs ?
Preach me not out of my possessions.

Shakspeare may have been thinking of this line when he wrote :—

The devil can quote scripture for his purpose.

In the 20th book of Chapman's Iliad, page 178 :—

This Jove-got Dardanus
Begot king Erichthonius, for wealth past all compares
Of living mortals ; in his fens he fed three thousand mares,
All neighing by their tender foals, of which twice-six were bred
By lofty Boreas, their dams lov'd by him as they fed,
He took the brave form of a horse that shook an azure mane,
And slept with them. These twice-six colts had pace so swift, they ran
Upon the top-ayles of corn-ears, nor bent them any whit ;
And when the broad back of the sea their pleasure was to sit,
The superficies of his waves they slid upon, their hoves
Not dipp'd in dank sweat of his brows.

These horses of Boreas are very fanciful and antic spirits. Shakspeare's creation of Puck may have arisen from Homer's Apollo, and Boreas, this spirit of the wind. He must have been thinking of these lines, however, when he penned the following, in Midsummer Night's Dream, act 1, scene 2 :—

Puck. I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly-foal.

Titania, [to Ob.] But I know when thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love to amorous Phillida.

The 24th book of the Iliad, page 257 :—

And now to holy Ilion Saturnius Iris sent :
" Go, swift-foot Iris, bid Troy's king bear fit gifts, and content
Achilles for his son's release."
This said, the Rainbow to her feet tied whirlwinds, and the place
Reach'd instantly.

Again, Mercury, as a swift-foot messenger, is described thus, page 261 :—

This charge incontinent he put in practice,
To his feet his feather'd shoes he tied,
Immortal, and made all of gold, with which he us'd to ride
The rough sea, and th' unmeasur'd earth, and equall'd in his pace the puffs of wind.

In Midsummer Night's Dream, act 2, scene 3 :—

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.

The Tempest, act 4, scene 2 :—

Ariel. Before you can say come and go,
I drink the air before me, and return,
Or e'er your pulse twice beats.

W. G. PROVERBS, STEAM PRINTING WORKS, LEDSAM STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

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